

other Grand Inquests do upon oath or statement in regard to the particular facts.

But even admitting, for the sake of argument, that the charge be true, and that certain persons are confined against their will, still your Committee are of the opinion that the laws of the land, and those now in force in this State, furnish an effectual and complete remedy for all such cases as have been reported for their consideration.

It would, indeed, be an outrage were it not so, and if, in fact, it were permitted to any religious sect or persuasion to erect private houses or Convents, with intent to confine persons unlawfully within their walls, and if, in a single instance, properly authenticated, such an intention were carried out with impunity, it would not only be a flagrant violation of all law, but an outrage upon the feelings of any civilized community.

But your Committee need only remind the House that that great safeguard of personal liberty, the writ of Habeas Corpus, throws ample protection around even the humblest citizen of our Commonwealth; and, that if any person, whatever, has reason to believe that any individual is detained unlawfully, or against his will, in any Convent or Religious House, upon oath of such person so believing, before any Court of this State, this writ issues, as of right, commanding the Owner, Director, or Superior of any such House or Convent, to bring before such Court the individual so detained; and neither bolts nor bars, nor any religious vows, can prevent the service of, or compliance with such a writ; but it is a speedy, summary, and sure writ of deliverance to any one deprived of his liberty, by any unlawful means, or under pretext of any religious vow or consecration.

Your Committee have, therefore, arrived at the unanimous conclusion, that, if, as alleged by the petitioners, persons are detained against their will, in any Religious House or Convent, it is not because the law does not afford ample protection, but because of the neglect to execute its demands; and it is the fault of those interested in the execution of the law, not the defect of proper legislation.

Believing, therefore, that no further legislation is necessary for the security of the citizen, or for the peace, good order, and safety of the State, they beg leave, respectfully, to submit these reasons, which have led them to this conclusion—to the further consideration of the House, and to the enlightened judgment of the people of Maryland.

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